(b) and (c) The Government is already making the following efforts to promote use of organic manures:—

(i) The Government is promoting Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) which envisage soil test based judicious use of chemical fertilizers in conjuction with organic manures and bio-fertilizers.

(ii) Financial assistance for setting up of mechanized compost plants for conversion of bio-degradable city waste into compost is being provided under the scheme "Balanced and Integrated Use of Fertilizers", now subsumed under the Macro-Management of Agriculture Scheme.

(iii) The Government has taken up a central sector scheme "National Project on Organic Farming", under which subsidy for setting up of organic input production units @25% of the project cost upto a miximum of Rs. 40.00 lakhs per unit for fruit/vegetable waste compost units, Rs. 20.00 lakhs per unit for bio-fertilizer production units and Rs. 150 lakhs per unit for Vermiculture hatcheries is being provided as credit linked and back ended subsidy through National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

(d) Question does not arise.

Separate Agricultural Policy for hilly States

†2755. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to different circumstances and different landscape in hilly States the Government are considering upon a Separate Agricultural policy for these States;

(b) if so, the salient feature of this policy; and

(c) the names of crops which are being promoted in the hilly States keeping in view the difference between hilly States and plain areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, in order to harness the potential of horticulture in the North Eastern region, Government of India, in 2001-02, sanctioned a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Technology

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Mission for Integrated development of Horticulture in North Eastern States including Sikkim. The scheme was then extended to three other hilly States namely Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal during the Tenth plan (2003-04) with a total outlay of Rs. 845 crore, of which Rs. 585 crore was for NE States. The Technology Mission is being implemented in a mission mode with an end-to-end approach which includes development and introduction of high yielding varieties and technologies, expansion of area, post harvest handling and management, markeing, value addition and processing of horticultural produce. It covers fruits, vegetables, spices, flowers and other horticulture crops.

Assistance to Vidarbha

2756. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government have taken to save Vidarbha farmers who are under debt burden;

(b) whether it is a fact that there are cows but no fodder or maintenance and the milk yield without any marketing back up are rendering the cows as a liability to Vidarbha farmers; and

(c) the reaction of Government on (a) and (b) above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) The Government of India has sanctioned a rehabilitation package of Rs. 3873.26 crore for six districts of Vidharbha region in Maharashtra. It is being implemented over a period of three years. This includes both subsidy/grant and loan component. The package *inter-alia* includes the following:

(i) Debt relief to farmers: Around Rs. 1296.00 crore of overdue loan amounts of farmers, as on 30th June, 2006 in the identified districts of Vidarbha in Maharashtra will be restructured/rescheduled.

(ii) Credit Flow: The estimated credit flow for the year 2006-07 is Rs. 1275.00 crore.

(iii) Interest Waiver: The overdue interest on agricultural loans as on 30th June, 2006 amounting to Rs. 712.00 crore will be waived. The burden of waiver will be shared equally between Central and the State Government.